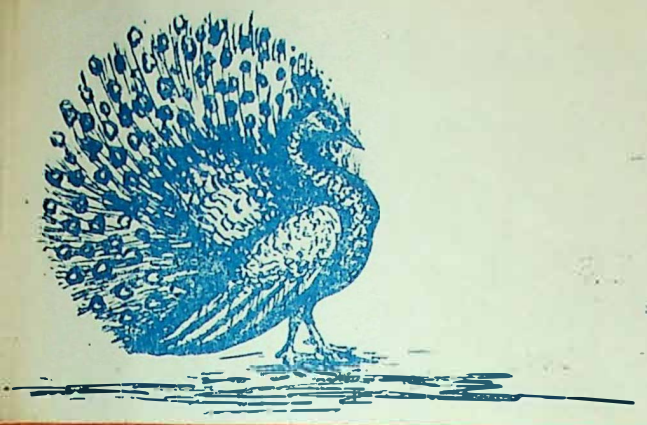
AASHEESH PITTIE,
14-7-370, BEGUM BAZAR
HYDERABAD-500 012.



MAYURA

Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh

2nd Oct 1982.

Vol.III JANUARY - JULY, 1982 No. 1 - 2

Indexed

ACT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE

During the regular birdwatching trips, members of the Birdwatchers' Club were pained to see indiscriminate destruction of many beautiful natural rock formations around the city of Hyderabad by contractors of stone quarries for monetary considerations. These rock formations, besides providing great aesthetic appeal to the tourist, also shelter many scrub-country birds, smaller mammals and other fauna and flora. The rocky terrain near Himayatsagar lake on the outskirts of the city under destruction provides an excellent illustration of the point under consideration. Similarly, Hussainsagar tank linking Twin Cities of Hyderabad is getting polluted by industrial effluents from various factories. Smaller tanks - one situated in Banjara Hills and another at Chilkoor - are either being polluted or prevented from filling up, to the detriment of birds and fish which very much depend on tanks. These lakes are becoming an eye sore and are no more a place for relaxation.

Though-less destruction of many big trees, as the banyan trees situated near Mir Alam Tank, have deprived birds of their perching, roosting and feeding sites. The massive felling of huge trees within the compound of the Secretariat is really very painful and is indicative of extent of our apathy to the preservation of environment.

Wanton and unrestricted destruction of our natural resources such as trees, lakes, hills etc., is already having its own repercussions. Unless the consequences of such destruction are realised in time and a halt put to the harm being perpetuated to our own ecosystem before it is too late, nature will strike back with increased vehemence in the form of calamities like floods, drought and such other natural disturbances.

S. TEJ KUMAR

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For contributing articles to MAYURA and membership of the club please address Dr. S. Tej Kumar, Convenor, Birdwatchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh, Department of Entomology, College of Agriculture Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030. A.P.

* *

——— Edited by Dr. S. Tej Kumar.

BIRD WATCHING AT VELTUR TANK - BY S. ASHOK KUMAR, I.A.S.

While motoring along the National Highway No.7 on 2nd September, I spotted a small tank abutting the road at 122 K.M. stone. Parking my car on the roadside, I walked to the road margin and surveyed the tank. In the midist of the tank bed and at a safe distance from the Highway and the bund are about 30 Acacia Arabica trees. The tank is brimming with water because of freshes due to recent monsoon rains. The Acacia trees, thus insulated from human and animal interference, afford and ideal habitat for nesting and breeding. I found a mixed heronry co-existing with an extensive colony of voiceferous Baya birds. The heronry consists of Grey Herons, Little Egrets, Cattle Egrets, Cormorants, Pond Herons and Ibis. While the egrets are roosting in 11 trees, the Bayas have chosen two trees for their colony. It was almost dusk and against the backdrop of ash grey sky, I could not identify whether the Ibis are white or black. So I resolved to visit the tank again, armed with the binoculars.

On 19th September, I revisited the tank. The chwherd informed me that the tank goes by the name of Komati Kunta of Veltur village. As the Herons, Egrets and Ibis had not yet returned to their roosting place, I went over the tank bund to observe the Baya nests. I focussed my binoculars on the colony of nests suspended from the overhanging branches and found it to be that of the Black Breasted Weaver Bird. The male bird with its beautiful coat of breeding plumage - brilliant golden crown, white throat and black band below - looked exceedingly handsome. It was fascinating to watch the male bird flying from one nest to another and calling on the lady birds and finally making a dash to the unfinished green nest to complete it for another mate. The din of the Bayas was occasionally pierced by the croaking of few egrets incubating in the nests. I follllowed the thick tree branch with my binoculars and found a snake with brown and white bands lying in wait for its prey. I witnessed two egrets taking charge of incubating duties and relieving the other birds for foraging.

My digital blinked 5.45 p.m., when I sighted flocks of egrets winging their way from the eastern paddy fields to their roosting place. After circling over the tank twice or thrice, they landed on the tree branches and soon indulged in vocalisation. I counted 29 little Cormorants, 4 White Ibis and number of Cattle Egrets, Little Egrets, Grey Herons and Pond Herons. That the Little Egrets are breeding is evidenced by the long dropping crest of two narrow plumes. These plumes were strikingly beautiful whenever the bird moved its head. The cattle Egrets were also in breeding plumes - orange-buff head, neck and back. On the farthest tree I could see a long Common Kingfisher. My attention was drawn to the flight of two birds which landed on the lower branch of the nearest tree. Focussing my binoculars, I found them to be Pied Crested Cuckoo. The White tips of tail feathers and round patches on wings conspicuous during their flight were unmistakable. The din of the ubiquitous common Mynas drowned the crackle of the Egrets. The White Ibis silhouetted against the grey sky provided a magnificent view.

contd..2..

A RED VENTED BULBUL NEST -- BY B.C.CHOUDHURY

Eversince I have become a birdwatcher, (from 1976 but rather seriously from 1979) I do not hesitate to check nests of birds that are located in less than six feet abov the ground. My height being five feet then inches I can easily examine a nest at this height without even touching it. My self imposed restrictions in this regard are never to touch or disturb a nest nor to take out eggs from a nest. Sometime, however, I do move aside a few branches temporarily to allow better light for photography.

One such nest I examined was made by a pair of Redvented Bulbul (Pycnonotus cafer Linnaeus) on a lemon (Citrus) tree in my quarter compound at Nehru Zoological Park. I observed this pair of Redvented Bulbul collecting small strands of roots and preparing the nest from the first week of August,1980. By the 15th of August the cup shaped nest was ready at height of five feet, on the base of a forked branch. By now, I had made my window parapet some twenty feet away, and nine feet about ground, a perfect place to sit and observe the birds with my 8 x 40 binoculars. On the 16th of August, I saw the first egg in the nest - a pinkish white egg with purple brown blotches. One of the parents remained near the nest all the time.

At this time we had a problem of ticks invading the house. These small white ticks crawled all over the place on chairs, tables, bed garden and every other place. My neighbour decided to do away with them and sprayed ~~every other place~~ a water diluted mixture of Bavithion (an insecticide) all over including the garden and the Citrus tree. The Redvented Bulbul nest with the lone egg also got soaked of this insecticide. With all this disturbance the parents deserted the nest temporarily returning back by 5 pm, but not before I had marked the long egg with indelible ink.

On 19th August, I saw three eggs in the nest and during my serious observations on 21st, 24th and 27th found the parents very very attentive to the nest, sharing the parental duties. On 30th morning I found the nest bubbling with activity and there were two youngones. On 3rd Sept. when both the parents were away from the nest for a while I checked the nest and found the lone marked egg in the nest. I did not take it out but the next day found it lying on the ground below the nest. I opened it and found a clear fluid with no embryo. I do not know if this egg failed to hatch because of the insecticide, but birds eggs are not porous and are decication proof.

I was out of station for a week and returning ~~found~~ around 12th of September found the nest deserted.

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BIRDING AT THE VANASTHALI WITH BCAP - BY B.C.CHOUDHURY AND AASHDEEP PITTIE

20 September,1981

Time:- 8.47 hours to 1200 hours

Weather:- Overcast skies with a slight breeze

contd..3..

Habitat:- Fenced up open scrub jungle with introduced black buck, Cheetal and Chinkara. Vegetation predominantly Albizia and Acacia

BIRD LIST:

1. Black-winged Kite (Elanus caeruleus vociferus)
2. Pariah Kite (Milvus migrans govinda)
3. Painted Partridge (Francolinus p.pictus) - heard.
4. Grey Partridge (Francolinus p.pondicerianus)
5. Rain Quail (Coturnix coromandelica) - heard
6. Ringed Dove (Streptopelia d. decaocto)
7. Red Turtle Dove (Streptopelia t. tranquebarica)
8. Spotted Dove (Streptopelia chinensis suratensis)
9. Pied Crested Cuckoo (Clamator jacobinus serratus)-heard
10. Plaintive Cuckoo (Cacomantis merulinus passerinus)heard
11. Palm Swift (Cypsiurus parvus batasiensis)
12. Whitebreasted Kingfisher (Halcyon s. smyrnensis)
13. Small India Skylark (Alauda gulgula)
14. Wiretailed Swallow (Hirundo smithii filifera)
15. Baybacked shrike (Lanius v. vittatus)
16. Black Drongo (Dicrurus adsimilis macrocercus)
17. Brahminy Myna (Sturnus pagodarum) - juvenile
18. Common Myna (Acridotheres t. tristis)
19. Redvented Bulbul (Pycnonotus c. cafer)
20. Large Grey Babbler (Turdoides malcolmi)
21. Yellow Eyed Babbler (Chrysomma s. sinensis)
22. Weaver Bird (Ploceus p. phillippinus)

Also recorded:-

a) Indian Wren Warbler (Prinia subflava inornata)
b) Large Egret (Ardea alba alba)
c) Redwinged Bush Lark (Mirafra e. erythroptera)

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BIRDS SEEN ON A TREK DOWN THE MUSI - BY [illegible] PITTIE

On the 30th of August,1981 the members of the Hyderabad Nature Club trekked along the Musi, for about 15 kms. and arrived at the Mahavir Marina Vanasthali. We started from the T.V.tower in Malakpet.

It had rained early in the morning, and everything was wet. We had to walk through fields and 'too-thumb jungles' of Parthenium. We did walk, though in the end it had practically become a matter of putting one foot in front of the other. The last 2 kms. we thumbed a ride in a fiat.

I had maintained a list of all the birds we saw on that trek, which is produced below.

BIRD LIST:-

1. Ardeola grayii - common
2. Bubulcus Ibis Coromandus - common and in breeding plumage.
3. Egretta g. garzetta - not as common as the above twoge
4. Milvus migrans govinda - Very common near the village from which we commenced the trek. They flew low over the water and sometimes lowered their undercarriage into the flowing streams. One was perched on a floating clump of water hyacinth, agitating some leaves thereon.

contd..4..

5. Neophron percnopterus ginginianus - observed in flight
6. Francolinus pictus (?) - Seen in Vanasthali on the top of Babool (Acacia arabica) tree. It was calling in a rather rough voice and then being answered by another bird further off. Since the sun was against me, I thought it might be the Black Partridge but on reference I have found that the latter does not exist in the southern region. So it must be the Painted Partridge. The above observation regarding calls and answer is also made in the handbook.
7. Vanellus i. indicus - Quite common
8. Burhinus o. indicus - about a dozen in the deer park. They were reluctant to arise when approached and preferred to run along in front. While running, they were very erect.
9. Columba livia intermedia: - just one in flight
10. Streptopelia d. decaocto - common in Vanasthali. A pair feeding on the feed provided for the Black Bucks.
11. Streptopelia chinensis suratensis - common
12. Psttacula krameri - a few overhead, screaming their heads off.
13. Clamator jacobinus serratus - one on telegraph wire on river bank.
14. Eudynmys s. scolopacea - not many
15. Centropus sinensis parroti - in all approx., 6-10
16. Caprimulgus asiaticus asiaticus - one bird, disturbed by B.C.Choudhury while walking along a goat track. It was sitting on a rock about one feet above the ground.
17. Cypsiurus parvus batasiensis
18. Halcyon s. smyrnensis - one
19. Merops o. orientalis - common
20. Coracias benghalensis indica - 2-4
21. Eremopterix grisea - one
22. Hirundo smithii filifera - 2-4
23. Hirundo daurica erythropygia - common
24. Lanius vittatus vittatus - 2 in Vanasthali
25. Dicrurus adsimilis macrocercus - common
26. Artamus fuscus - on telegraph wire along the river, two birds
27. Sturnus pagodarum - common
28. Acridotheres tristis - common
29. Corvus s. splendens - common
30. Corvus macrorhynchus culminatus - 2 to 5
31. Aegithinia tiphia deignani - heard
32. Pycnonotus cafer - common
33. Turdoides c. caudatus - a good number. They prefer headgerows
34. Turdoides striatus orientalis - heard
35. Prinia socialis - very common. Singing from practically every bush in its high pitched voice.
36. Orthotomus sutorius guzurata - heard
37. Saxicola caprata
38. Saxicoloides fulicata
39. Motacilla maderaspatensis - a few
40. Passer domesticus indicus - only near human habitations
41. Ploceus p. philippinus - extremely common. Breeding and nesting activity in full swing. One well had well over 20 nests in it.
42. Lonchura m. malabarica (?) - nesting
43. Lonchura p. punctulata

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Contd..5..

SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - VI

BY
PUSHP KUMAR

DUCKS, GEESE & SWANS: Anatidae

A large group of large and conspicuous water birds classified by many as "game birds." The plumage is often colourful with varied patterns, except in the Swans, which are mostly white.

Of the 145 species listed world wide, 49 species find place in the list for the Sub-Continent. Of these 22 species are listed for Andhra Pradesh of which 4 require further confirmation and one is believed extinct. A further point that emerges is that 5 out of this list are resident birds and the rest are migratory in nature. Of these again 2 species belonging to the Geese and the others to Ducks, Teals and Pochards. No Swans occur in Andhra Pradesh. Local names for most species are surprisingly lacking, and vary from place to place eg., Kolleru, Pulicat, Barva etc., An attempt is made below to assign vernacular names based on characteristics and species affinites for eliciting comments prior to standardisation.

EASTERN GREYLAG GOOSE: Anser anser rubrirostris Swinhoe

Telugu - None recorded - Busudiranga Pedda Batu - Urdu - Hans, Sona etc.

Reports of this large grey goose with pinklegs mixed with parties of Barheaded Geese are received sporadically from locations along the Godavari and from Srikakulam Districts. However these reports require confirmation.

BARHEADED GOOSE: Anser indicus (Latham)

Telugu - Ramalatakka or Tella Pedda Batu - Urdu - Hans, Rajhans etc.

This large grey and white goose a winter visitor is well represented in parts of the State. It is found along the River Krishna in Mahabubnagar District, where the late S.V.Jagannadha Rao, an ardent nature lover, observed them gorging themselves on groundnut in groundnut fields to such an extent that they were "often unable to take off" and could be captured easily! In fact 2 live specimens were sent by him to the Nehru Zoological Park about 10 years back! They were also observed in large numbers in the Dindi Reservoir in January to May, 1981, Ibrahimpatnam tank, Malkapur (60 kms. west of Hyderabad City) and other tanks in this area. However not observed in Pulicat lake. Arives late November early December and leaves by early April.

LESSER WHISTLING TEAL: Dendrocygna javanica (Homfield).

Telugu - Nelavainà chinna chilva - Urdu - Seelhi

Found throughout the State in tanks with vegetation. Resident and breeding. Large congregations in Kolleru and Pulicat Lakes.

contd..6..

COMMON POCHARD: Aythya ferina (Linnaeus)

Telugu - None recorded - Chinna Yerra Tala Chiluva
Urdu - Lalsir

Winter visitor to the State. Small parties on open water diving under water at the slightest disturbance, dabchick like. Throughout the State.

WHITE EYED POCHARD: Aythya nyroca (Guldenstadt)

Telugu - None recorded - Tella Kantha Chiluva,
Urdu - Kurchiya

Winter visitor on most waters. White eye visible through binoculars even at a distance.

TUFTED DUCK: Aythya fuligula (Linnaeus)

Telugu - Nalla Chiluva, Jhuttu Chiluva, Urdu - Ablak

Winter visitor to most waters over most parts of the State.

SCAUP DUCK: Aythya marila marila (Linnaeus)

Telugu - None recorded - Nalla Chiluva - Urdu Ablak

Doubtful winter visitor. Often confused with preceding species.

COTTON TEAL: Nettapus coromandelianus coromandelianus (Gmelin)

Telugu - Girja, Dudi Chiluva, URDU - Girja

Common resident on most vegetation bearing waters. Breeds during July-August near forest lined tanks and lakes.

NAKTA OR COMBDUCK: Sarkidiornis melanotos melanotos (Pennant)

Telugu - Pandu Mukku Batu - Urdu - Nakta

Not so common resident. Few pairs seen on vegetation covered waters e.g., Manjira, Enkrial, ICRISAT, Pakhal etc., Nests during July-August in holes or hollows in large trees. Due to loss of such trees, status rapidly becoming endangered.

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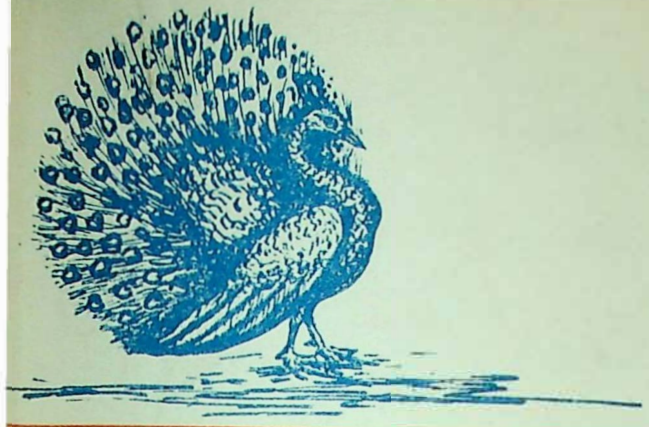

MAYURA

Newsletter of the Bird Watchers' Club of Andhra Pradesh

21.1.1983

Vol. III AUGUEST-DECEMBER,1982 No. 3 - 4

COME AND JOIN THE STREAM

At a time for rededication to the cause of conservation of nature, the members of Birdwather's Club of Andhra Pradesh, look back with satisfaction at arousing an ecological eonsciousness in the minds of the people. The club started with about a dozen members on January,12 1980 and has grown to a membership of more than 150 members, which is quite encouraging.

The avi-fauna in and around Hyderabad has been listed by members through their periodic visits to spots of ornithological interest which include, forest areas,scrub junge, grasslands, hilly regions, parks, gardens and lakes around the city of Hyderabad. But the Club does not wish to rest on its laurels. We intend to expand our activities with observations useful to the science of ornithology and the society, and by taking up projects of conservational interest in the near future, like identifying potential ornithological sites, bird ringing programmes etc.

This is also the time for you to join this worthy movement for the preservation of nature in her pristine purity.

S. TEJ KUMAR

BIRDS OF PREY

Although from the human point of view birds of prey seem to be the villains in the drama of nature, they play vital roles as predators and clean-up squads. Without eagles, hawks and owls, the rabbits, mice and rats would destroy grain fields; without vultures, decaying materials would remain on the ground. Shooting, the use of long lasting pesticides, and the loss of habitat through man's intrusions have caused a disastrous decline in the members of prey; more than 50 species are now endangered worldwide.

(see page 9)

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Birds (Class Aves) are feathered, warm-blooded vertebrates normally capable of flight. The total length (L) is measured from the apex of the beak to the end of the central tailfeathers with the bird lying on its back; it varies from 6 cm in hummingbirds to 235 cm in the pearl peacock and up to 600 cm in phoenix fowl, a Japanese race of the domestic fowl. The L from the tip of the beak to the tip of the foot is about 300 cm in the ostrich or 400 cm in the extinct giant moa. The wing length from the bend of the closed wing to the tip of the longest primary is 2.5 cm in the bee hummingbird, and reaches 85 cm in the condor. The wingspread, measured from one wing tip across the back to the other wing tip, is 7.5 cm in the bee hummingbird to 340 cm in the wandering albatross, or 500 cm in the extinct Nevada giant condor. The weight at the time of hatching from the egg is 0.19 g in the bee hummingbird to 1000 g in the ostrich (Struthio camelus), or 6500 g in the extinct ostriches of Madagascar. The weight of fully grown birds ranges from 1.6 g in hummingbirds to 144,000 g in the ostrich or 450,000 g in the extinct ostriches of Madagascar.

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For contributing articles to MAYURA and membership of the Club, please address; Siraj A.Taher, Convenor, Birdwatcher's Club of Andhra Pradesh, 6-3-249/3, Road No.1, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad-500 034.

* *

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY.

Edited for Birdwatcher's Club of Andhra Pradesh by Dr. S. Tej Kumar and Aasheesh Pittie.

BIRDWATCHING BETWEEN FOUR WALLS - II - By Md. Ali Khan

Birdwatching outdoors is certainly an exhilerating and rewarding experience. Nevertheless, watching birds within the confines of four walls is no less fascinating for an enthusiast; especially for one facing the limitations imposed by a busy, mechanical life in overcrowded cities.

I am giving below some observations regarding the behaviour of a few birds towards other birds and human beings which may be of some interest to fellow birdwatchers.

SPOTTED DOVE:- A pair is breeding successfull in my house since several years. Once, while cutting the wild shoots of the creepers, I heard the warning call of a bird. When I cleared the shoots, I noticed a spotted dove sitting on its nest. I grew inquisitive and tried to touch the bird with my hand. The bird tried to hit me with its wing and pecked at my hand. I got encouraged and caught the bird gently and lifted it to find that the nest contained two white eggs. I then placed the bird on its nest. It settled down comfortably once again, as if nothing had happened. This behaviour is similar to that of a domestic pigeon sitting on its nest. The warning call I think, was to let me know, that a dove is on its nest, not to be disturbed!

TAILOR BIRD:- A tailor bird had nested in my house in clerodendron leaves. It had so nicely stitched the nest, using cotton thread, that it looked like a cup of leaves! The small opening of the nest was under the shade of another large leaft, so that rain water could not enter and it was well hidden from a predator's eye. I used to inspect the nest daily, when the tailor-bird went out for food. I watched its nest from the time of laying to the fledgling stage. Unfortunately one day, I heard a hue and cry, and a lot of confusion in the clerodendron creeper. The pair of tailor birds was restless and was obviously in need of help. This time they allowed me to come very close to them and their nest. What was happening? A house sparrow noticed the cotton lining of the nest, and was trying to steal the cotton! Being smaller in size, they were unable to ward off their much bigger adversary. To tackle the problem, they used a wise strategy. They created a fuss, which attracted me. Obviously they knew about my love for birds and were not perturbed. When I disturbed the sparrow, it flew away and the tailor birds settled down again. But on returning in the evening I heard the same noise and was shocked to note that the nest was torn to pieces and the cotton lining gone. Two young tailor birds were sitting on the ground, unprotected, and the parents urging them to get into the bushes. I lifted both, and placed them in bougainvillae bushes. The parents used to bring small insects in their beaks and feed them within the creeper only. After a few days they were able to fly, and were not seen thereafter.

SHIKRA ??

SPARROW HAWK:- Once, when I was sitting in my bedroom, I heard some noise in an adjacent room, continuously, as if a struggle was on between birds, or a house sparrow was

probing for spiders. I got inquisitive and peeped into the room. To my surprise, a sparrow hawk was struggling to fly out and was dashing into the glass of the ventilator. I closed both the doors so that there was no escape. On examination, I found the remains of a house sparrow (feet, head and few feathers) scattered all over. The whole place was blood-stained. The sparrow hawk had completely devoured the house sparrow, except the head and feet. And its beak and talons were full of blood. Its crop was protruding in an odd manner, spoiling the symmetry of its body. I took a cane and touched the bird on its breast. The hawk easily stepped on it and I brought it very close to me and commenced admiring the camouflaging colour pattern of its feathers, the needle sharp talons and the strong curved beak. The eyes were so penetrating that I got afraid, that it might fly at my face. But no such thing happened and opening the doors of my drawing room, I brought the hawk into the open yard. It sat on the cane held by me and was very close to me for quite some time. Then with a sudden flash of wings it was gone. Two things still keep me pondering - why had the hawk brought the house sparrow into my drawing room in the middle of the day, and why had it perched on the cane, and not immediately fly off when I brought it into the open yard? I think the prey was brought into the room for leisurely enjoying a sumptous lunch in a safe and secluded place. The exhaution arising due to its unsuccessful attempt to escape must have confused it. And so it stepped onto the perch-like cane.

REDVENTED BULBUL:- A pair of redvented bulbuls built a nest in a Bignonia vinista creeper, well hidden, and out of sight of predators. It was a cup shaped structure built with small dry sticks of neem. After a fortnight the pair had started bringing small insects to the nest, so I presumed that the chicks had come out of the eggs. The tender and imploring sounds of the chicks confirmed my presumptions. Shortly afterwards, I noticed a house crow getting excited on seeing the parents' frequent visits to the nest with insects in their beaks. It sat on the creeper and peeped through the leaves to observe the location and contents of the nest. Then it flew away. After some time the crow brought its partner and, inspite of my attempts to ward them off (by clapping) they succeeded in snatching the two fledglings of the bulbuls. It was quite a pathetic sight to observe the sad parents perched on the creeper, blankly gazing at the empty nest which had been razed to the ground, in complete muteness. But, viewed from another angle, one may have to turn a little philosophical and accept that this is the way of nature and this is how an ecological equilibrium is maintained. In a momentary trance, I thought I heard Darwin saying "Survival of the Fittest!"

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BIRDWATCHING AT MANJIRA WITH BIRDWATCHER'S CLUB OF ANDHRA PRADESH

By Binod C.Choudhury & Aasheesh Pittie

DATE: 29th November,1981

TIME: 9.08 hours

WEATHER: Cool and clear. Warm later during the morning and afternoon.

HABITAT: We had started out for Manjira, but on the way stopped at a wayside lake. This was a body of water which must have collected in the monsoon rains. It turned out to be a haven for birds. A large number of water birds and winter migrants were seen here. In general, the habitats on this strip were marshy and swampy lakes, and a fresh-water reservoir. On hard ground, it was the typical habitat of open scrubland, dotted with rocky formations.

BIRD LIST:

1. Little Cormorant (Phalacrocorax niger)
2. Grey Heron (Ardea cinerea)
3. Purple Heron (Ardea purpurea)- in flight over Manjira
4. Paddy Bird (Ardeola grayii)
5. Large Egret (Ardea alba)
6. Little Egret (Egretta garzetta)
7. Openbilled Stork (Anastomus oscitans) - a flock of 40 on wayside lake
8. Whitenecked Stork (Ciconia episcopus)-Mr.Siraj Taher's list.
9. Barheaded Goose (Anser indicus) - a bit doubtful
10. Brahminy Duck (Tadorna ferruginea)
11. Pintail (Anas acuta)
12. Common Teal (Anas crecca)
13. Spotbill (Anas poecilorhyncha)
14. Wigeon (Anas penelope)
15. Gargeny (Anas querquedula)
16. Redcrested Pochard (Netta rufina)
17. Cotton Teal (Nettapus coromandelianus)
18. Blackwinged Kite (Elanus caeruleus)
19. Pariah Kite (Milvus migrans)
20. Indian Shikra (Accipiter badius)
21. Brahminy Kite (Haliastur indus)
22. Whitebacked Vulture (Gyps bengalensis)
23. Egyptian Vulture (Neophron percnopterus)
24. Pale Harrier (Circus macrourus)
25. Marsh Harrier (Circus aeruginosus)
26. Montagu's Harrier (Circus pygargus)
27. Coot (Fulica atra)
28. Bronzewinged Jacana (Metopidius indicus)
29. Redwattled Lapwing (Vanellus indicus)
30. Blacktailed Godwit (Limosa limosa) - an important sighting

    There were 3 of these birds on the wayside lake, flying about in a V formation.
31. Greenshank - (Tringa nebularia) - Mr.Siraj Taher's notes
32. Common Sandpiper (Tringa hypoleucus)
33. Little Stint (Calidris minutus)
34. Blackwinged Stilt (Himantopus himantopus)

35. Blue Rock Pigeon (Columba livia)
36. Ringed Dove (Streptopelia decaocto)
37. House Swift (Apus affinis)
38. Pied Kingfisher (Ceryle rudis)
39. Whitebreasted Kingfisher (Halcyon smyrnensis)
40. Roller (Coracias benghalensis)
41. Small Green Bee-Eater (Merops orientalis)
42. Greyheaded Myna (Sturnus malabaricus) - seen at Koti
43. Rosy Pastor (Sturnus roseus) - Mr.Siraj Taher's notes
44. House Crow (Corvus splendens)
45. Pied Bushchat (Saxicola caprata)
46. Large Pied Wagtail (Motacilla maderaspatensis)
47. Indian Pipit (Anthus novaeseelandiae)
48. Whitethroated Munia (Lonchura malabarica)
49. Ashycrowned Finch Lark (Eremopterix grisea)
50. Common swallow (Hirundo rustica)
51. Black Drongo (Dicrurus adsimilis)

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BIRDWATCHING AT SHAMIRPET BY THE MEMBERS:

DATE: 27th December, 1981

TIME: 8.25 hours

WEATHER: Sunshine and cool breeze

HABITAT: Open rocky countriside. The lake is dotted with islands of rock ideal and safe retreats for the ducks. The lake was quite full, though the highest water mark on rocks was atleast 10-12 feet aboue the present water surface. Shamirpet is 30 km. from Hyderabad city, in a northerly direction.

All

BIRD LIST:

1. Little Cormorant - (Phalacrocorax niger) - a flock of 25 flying low over the water, later swimming and feeding.
2. Cattle Egret (Bubulcus ibis)
3. Whitenecked Storck (Ciconia episcopus) - an individual
4. Brahminy Duck (Tadorna ferruginea)
5. Brahminy Kite (Haliastur indus)
6. Longbilled Vulture (Gyps indicus) - soaring overhead
7. Whitebacked Vulture (Gyps bengalensis) "
8. Egyptian Vulture (Neophron percnopterus)
9. Pale Harrier (Circus macrourus)
10. Montagu's Harrier (Circus pygargus)
11. Kestrel (Falco tinnunculus)
12. Quail - ?
13. Redwattled Lapwing (Vanellus indicus)
14. Little Ringed Plover (Charadrius dubius)
15. Greenshank (Tringa nebularia)
16. Common Sandpiper (Tringa hypoleucus)
17. Snipe - ?
18. Stint - ?
19. Blue Rock Pigeon (Columba livia)
20. Spotted Dover (Streptopelia chinensis)
21. Little Brown Dove (Streptopelia senegalensis)
22. Coucal (Centropus sinensis)
23. Pied Kingfisher (Ceryle rudis)
24. Small Blue Kingfisher (Alcedo atthis)
25. Whitebreasted Kingfisher (Halcyon smyrnensis)

26. Small Green Bee-Eater (Merops orientalis)
27. Roller (Coracias benghalensis)
28. Ashycrowned Finch Lark (Eremopterix grisea)
29. Short-toed Lark (Calandrella cinerea)
30. Crested Lark (Galerida cristata)
31. Indian Skylark (Alauda gulgula)
32. Common Swallow (Hirundo rustica)
33. Grey Shrike (Lanius excubitor)
34. Rufousbacked Shrike (Lanius schach)
35. Black Drongo (Dicrurus adsimillis)
36. Common Myna (Acridotheres tristis)
37. Indian Tree Pie (Dendrocitta vagabunda) - seen while returning as it crossed over from one side of the road to the other in front of our jeep, into some babool trees.
38. House Crow (Corvus splendens)
39. Jungle Crow (Crovus macrorhynchos)
40. Redvented Bulbul (Pycnonotus cafer)
41. Common Babbler (Turdoides caudatus)
42. Indian Wren Warbler (Prinia subflava)
43. Grasshopper Warbler (Locustella naevia) - spotted by Mr.Pushp Kumar, in some young babool trees. (It is a Winter migrant)
44. Indian Great Reed Warbler (Acrocephalus stentoreus)
45. Black Redstart (Phoenicurus oehruros)
46. Pied Bushchat (Saxicola caprata) - a female
47. Indian Robin (Saxicoloides fulicata)
48. Blue Rock Thrush (Monticola solitarius)
49. Indian Pipit (Anthus novaeseelandiae)
50. Large Pied Wagtail (Motacilla maderaspatensis)
51. House Sparrow (Passer domesticus)
52. Baya (Ploceus philippinus)
53. Red Munia (Estrilda amandava)
54. Whitethroated Munia (Lonchura malabarica)
55. Greynecked Bunting (Emberiza buchanani buchanani) a very rare winter visitor. It was spotted by Mr. Pushp Kumar - who incidentally was on the lookout for this bird right from the begining of this trip.

According to the Handbook (Vol.10) the Greynecked Bunting is found in Northern Andhra Pradesh, (Asifabad, c. 80 degrees E). This bird is, therefore, an addition to the list of birds for Hyderabad's environs.

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TIPS ON BIRDWATCHING - I - Compiled by Siraj A. Taher

HOW TO KEEP A LIFE LIST:

1. A life list is a written record of every bird you have seen and identified, either on your field trips or, elsewhere. On preparing list, you will not have to depend on your memory later when you wish to recollect the birds you might have seen.

2. Whenever you see and identify a live bird in the wild, put down its name and the place where it was seen. Behaviour like hovering, way of feeding etc. may also be noted. Birds in your garden or at the water trough in your house may also be included. Whenever in doubt, make a sketch (however haphazard or silly-looking it may be), and note down the tail pattern, plumage, beak shape, approximate size etc. Get an experienced birdwatcher to confirm your identification.

3. On a field trip, take a note book, a field guide and record birds as and how you see them. Note the weather conditions, the time of day and typical habitat of the place. Use field cards if published by your Society for the area in which you are birdwatching. Preserve these life lists.

4. For permanent records, use file cards or loose leaf books. One card or a page for each specie of bird you have seen is the way to do it. Write the name of the bird (both common and scientific) at the top of the page; eg. Quail, Common (Coturnixcoturnix). Note the date and place of first sighting. Add other sightings later on. Observations of behaviour, feeding, breeding etc. should also be noted wherever possible.

5. Other types of bird lists can also be maintained if prefered, eg.- trip lits, habitat lists, migration lists etc.

6. File the cards or loose leaves alphabetically. Later these cards could be organised by families.

7. Number and preserve the field note books. Put down the book numbers against the entries in the life list. This will make it convenient for easy cross reference.

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A SURVEY OF THE BIRDS OF ANDHRA PRADESH - PART VII

By Pushp Kumar

HAWKS, VULTURES ETC. - Fam: ACCIPITRIDAE

The Birds of Prey or Raptores - terms that are generally applied to this large group of birds alongwith Falcons (Fam: Falconidae) and the Owls (Fam: Strigidae). The Hawk group includes the Hawks, Kites, Buzzards, Eagles, Vultures, Harriers and the Osprey. Though some authorities assign a separate family for the Osprey (Pandionidae) the Synopsis and the Handbook assign the Osprey to the Accipitridae. These large birds with a hooked beak (for tearing) and powerful talons (for seizing and holding their prey) with usually brown, grey, white and black plumages are well represented in Andhra Pradesh. Of the 205 species listed for the world 82 species and sub-species are listed by the Synopsis and the Handbook for India. Of these 39 are reported in the State. However 5 species require further confirmation.

Most people who observe natural phenomena remark at the decline of the populations of Raptores in general - even Kites are not seen in such large numbers as they used to be. The reasons are diverse for the decline of the Raptore populations. People also remark at the pehnomenal growth of the rat population. The connection is not far to seek. Another phenomenon connected with these observations is the decline in the numbers of large trees. Large trees are cut in the country side everywhere. Large trees are essential to the Raptores; for nesting, for roosting and for perching, from where they launch out on their hunt. Raptores are at the apex of an ecological chain involving rodents and insects. Their decline or removal can only result in ecological and economic problems.

Blackwinged Kite:- Elanus caeruleus vociferus (Latham).

Telugu:- Adavi Ramadasu, Tella Gedda (?) Urdu:- Kapassi, Safed Cheel (?)

A handsome grey and white bird with its habit of hovering in the air like a kestrel. Resident. Occurs throughout the State. Nested regularly in Nehru Zoological Park from 1968 to 1970 on a dried Acacia arabica tree in the maidan enclosure. The brown streaked young could be seen for months afterwards in the Zoo. A pair nests regularly in the Vanasthali.

LEGGE'S BAZA: Aviceda jerdoni ceylonensis (Legge)

Telugu:- Baza (?) Urdu:- Baz (?)

A brown and white streaked bird of medium size with a prominent upturned white tipped crest and a dark mesial stripe. Status not known. Observed twice in the State. In 1974 in the Forest south of Chintapalli near Kolhapur in Mahbubnagar District during December. The second time on Farhabad plateau in Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary in November, 1979. This species is not listed either by the Synopsis or the Handbook as occuring in Andhra Pradesh. The bird is assumed to be of the southern sub-species due to affinity to the locality of the described sub-species and due to the darker plumage of the birds observed.

INDIAN BLACK CRESTED BAZA: Aviceda leuphotes leuphotes (Dumont)

Telugu:- Baza (?) Urdu:- Baz (?)

The Synopsis mentions one of the 5 undated records as being from "Tamilnadu (Nellore)" (!) besides this, there is no other record of this bird in Andhra Pradesh.

CRESTED HONEY BUZZARD: Pernis ptilorhynchus ruficollis (Lesson)

Telugu:-Tenu Gedda, Tenay Gedda, Urdu:- Shatrulela (?)

Resident. Found throughout the State in Forests and well wooded areas near cities. Observed regularly in Nehru Zoological Park. The black narrow crest visible only when bird excited while sitting or in flight when mobbed by Drongos, Mynas etc.

PARIAH KITE: Milvus migrans govinda Sykes

Telugu:- Mala Gedda, Malla Gedda - Urdu:-Cheel

The commonest raptore found throughout the State. The status of this bird has also declined everwhere. Resident. In and around Hyderabad nests during Oct-Nov. Prior to this large numbers gather in Sept. and soar together. Spectacular aerobatic displays between pairs (?) can then be seen. A bold scavenger picks up pieces of refuse deftly. One pair observed nesting during November on same coconut tree in the heart of the old city for the past 8 years ! Numbers also seen at the municipal refuse dump near Vanasthali in association with vultures. Also at slaughter houses and at western end of the runway of the Airport at Hyderabad presumably for garbage dumped in the Kukatpalli nallah! No doubt unwittingly it comes in conflict with aircraft taking off! Yet it gets blamed ! Is this why its called the Pariah Kite?

BLACK EARED OR LARGE INDIAN KITE: Milvus migrans lineatus (Gray)

Telugu:Geddah, Pedda Gedda (?) Urdu: Cheel, Badi Cheel (?)

Winter visitor. Numbers seen in association with the Pariah Kite. Observed near Manjira Barrage, Dindi Reservoir, Mannanur, Visakhapatnam etc.

BRAHMINY KITE: Haliustur indus indus (Boddaert)

Telugu:Bapana Gedda, Garuda Lawa, Garuda Mantaru, Krishna ~~Rakxxx~~ Gedda, Garuda Pakshi.

Urdu:- Brahmini Cheel, Dhobia Cheel, Roo Mubarak.

Resident. This handsome white and rich brown raptore is found throughout the State near and over reservoirs, lakes, tanks etc. Its aerobatic prowess shows up best in the Pulicat Lake where it can be seen swooping fearlessly on the catch of the fishermen and often getting away with a fish or shrimp inspite of the flailing arms of the fishermen ! The local name is an English misapellation perhaps,

since its the sanyasins in India who wear saffron robes and not the brahmins! It is also the Garuda of Mythology. Garuda is also the name of Indonesia's National airlines!

SHIKRA:-Accipiter badius dussumieri (Temminck)

Telugu:- Jale Dega Urdu:- Shikra

Resident. Found throughout the State in Gardens, Forests and open country often in the Nehru Zoological Park where it sits atop the small bird aviaries to catch an unwary bird that alights on the mesh and then pulls it through the mesh! Pairs alongwith other hawks in the Kambalkonda R.F. in Vizag around the appropriately named Degalagedda!

CRESTED GOSHAWK:- Accipiter trivirgatus indicus (Hodgson)

Telugu:- Kokila Dega Urdu: Manik besra

Resident. Observed at Dayyam Vagu in Eturnagaram Sanctuary on 10th Nov.1982. Also near Maredumilli in the Eastern Ghats. Occurance of A.t. peninsula Koelz south of River Krishna requires confirmation though similar looking birds observed in Nandikotkur area of Kurnool Dist. in Sept.1982 during the Bustard survey.

SPARROW HAWK:Warna Accipiter nisus nisosimilis (Tickell)

Telugu: Warnapu Dega : Urdu:- Basha

Migrant. Pairs seen soaring throughout the State during October to March over fields as well as forests.

BESRA SPARROW HAWK:Accipiter virgatus besra (Jerdon)

Telugu:- Vaishnamu Dega : Urdu: Besra

Status not known. Reported from Southern parts of the State. Observed once in Peddacheruvu forest area in Nagarjunasagar-Srisailam Sanctuary. Old Falconers of andhra familiar with this bird.

LONGLEGGED BUZZARD:Buteo rutinus rufinus (Cretzschmar)

Telugu (?) Urdu: Chuhamar

Migrant. Seen patchily throughout the State in confusing phases and plumages suggesting different races, which require further observation. Occurs in various habitats, usually open country with scattered trees. Once observed in Banyan on road to Sangareddy, a neem tree Dindi and on the boulders near Himayatsagar etc.

BUZZARD: Buteo buteo japonicus (Temminck & Schlegel)

Telugu: Urdu: Chuhamar

Migrant. Very patchily in the State. Observed near Chilkur Deer Park in November,1980.

WHITE EYED BUZZARD-EAGLE:Butastur teesa (Franklin)

Telugu:-Budamali Gedda Urdu: Teesa

Resident. Fairly well distributed throughout the State both in Forest areas,where seen perched on medium sized trees in deep forests,as well as on telegraph and electric posts along road sides in open country.

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